

# Waris language

**Waris** or **Walsa** is a Papuan language of northern New Guinea.

It is spoken by about 2,500 people around Wasengla (3.294675°S 141.073027°E﻿ / ﻿Doponendi ward, Walsa Rural LLG, Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea﻿ / ﻿and also by about 1,500 across the border in Waris District, Keerom Regency in the Indonesian province of Papua<sup>[3]</sup><sup>[4]</sup>

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## Phonology

### Vowels

#### Monophthongs

|                  | <u>Front</u> | <u>Central</u> | <u>Back</u> |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| <u>Close</u>     | i            |                | u           |
| <u>Close-mid</u> | e            |                |             |
| <u>Mid</u>       |              | ə              |             |
| <u>Open-mid</u>  | ɛ            |                | ɔ           |
| <u>Near-open</u> | æ            |                |             |
| <u>Open</u>      |              | a              | ɒ           |

#### Diphthongs and triphthongs

| Waris  |   |
|--|---|
| Region   | Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea; Waris District, Keerom Regency, Papua province, Indonesia   |
| Native speakers  | (undated figure of 4,000) <sup>[1]</sup>  |
| Language family  | <div>Border<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bewani Range<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bapi River<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Waris</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></div> |
| Writing system   | Latin   |
| Language codes   |   |
| ISO 639-3  | wrs   |
| Glottolog  | wari1266 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/wari1266</span> ) <sup>[2]</sup>   |
| Coordinates: <span><span><span><span><span>3.294675°S</span> <span>141.073027°E</span></span></span></span></span> |   |

|    | Vi | Vɛ | Vɑ | Vɒ | Vɔ | Vu |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| iV |    |    | ia |    |    |    |
| ɛV |    |    |    |    | ɛɔ | ɛu |
| ɑV | ɑi |    |    |    | ɑɔ |    |
| ɒV | ɒi |    |    |    |    |    |
| ɔV | ɔi |    | ɔɑ |    |    |    |
| uV | ui | uɛ | uɑ | uɒ |    |    |

There are two triphthongs, /ɔɑi/ and /uɛu/.

## Consonants

|                            |                     | <u>Bilabial</u> | <u>Alveolar</u> | <u>Palatal</u> | <u>Velar</u>   |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <u>Stop</u>                | <u>Voiceless</u>    | p               | t               |                | k              |
|                            | <u>Prenasalised</u> | <sup>m</sup> b  | <sup>n</sup> d  |                | <sup>ŋ</sup> g |
| <u>Nasal</u>               |                     | m               | n               |                |                |
| <u>Fricative</u>           | <u>Voiceless</u>    |                 | s               |                | x              |
|                            | <u>Voiced</u>       | β               |                 |                |                |
| <u>Trill</u>               |                     |                 | r               |                |                |
| <u>Lateral approximant</u> |                     |                 | l               |                |                |
| <u>Approximant</u>         |                     | w               |                 | j              |                |

## Classifiers

Classifier prefixes in Waris attach to verbs, and are determined via the physical properties of the object noun phrase being referred to. Many of them have parallels with independent verb roots, which may well be where they had originated from. Examples include:<sup>[5]</sup>

*wonda ka-m mwan-vra-ho-o*  
netbag 1-DAT **CLF**-get-BEN-IMP  
'Give me a netbag.'

*nenas ka-m li-ra-ho-o*  
pineapple 1-DAT **CLF**-get-BEN-IMP  
'Give me a pineapple.'

*nelus ka-m ninge-ra-ho-o*  
greens 1-DAT **CLF**-get-BEN-IMP  
'Give me some greens'

Many of these prefixes have lexical parallels with verb roots. The list of classifier prefixes is:<sup>[5]</sup>

| classifier prefix | semantic category                                     | verb root parallel                            |
|-------------------|---|---|
| mwan-             | soft pliable objects like net bags, skirts, bark mats |   |
| li-               | fruits like pineapples, ears of corn or pandanus      | le- 'cut off oblong fruit'                    |
| vela-             | objects found inside a container                      | vela- 'remove'                                |
| put-              | spherical objects, commonly fruits                    | puet- 'pick fruit'                            |
| ninge-            | food cooked and wrapped                               | ninge- 'tie up'                               |
| vet-              | food removed from fire without wrapping               |   |
| le-               | leaf-like objects with no or soft stem                |   |
| pola-             | leaf-like objects with hard stem                      |   |
| ih-               | grainy materials                                      | ih- 'remove grainy material from a container' |
| tuvv-             | pieces cut from longer lengths                        | tuvva- 'chop into lengths'                    |
| kov-              | lengths of vine                                       | kovva- 'cut off'                              |

## References

1. Waris at *Ethnologue* (<https://www.ethnologue.com/13/>) (13th ed., 1996).
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  4. United Nations in Papua New Guinea (2018). "Papua New Guinea Village Coordinates Lookup" (<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/village-coordinates-lookup>). *Humanitarian Data Exchange*. 1.31.9.
  5. Foley, William A. (2018). "The Languages of the Sepik-Ramu Basin and Environs". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 197–432. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
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